



WADDESDON

Pete Avery volunteers in the Gardens at Waddesdon



"I arrive at approximately 8am, kitted out with boots and 'yellows', plus working trousers, thick socks, various layers according to the weather, hoody, heavy duty coat plus assorted gloves, secateurs and a trowel - I like to be prepared for anything – a packed lunch and snacks and drinks for break times. The gardeners' depot is warm, welcoming and spacious – a significant improvement on its predecessor.

What will I be doing today? Volunteers are deployed according to need and

what they are capable of doing. For me, this is more or less anything, because I am fit, strong and been doing this for over 10 years. So it could be planting, ripping out, or tidying up in the ornamental parts of the garden (parterre, aviary, around the house, star beds, rose garden, winter gardens, Tay Bridge...), or light pruning (with secateurs) or heavy pruning (with loppers and saws) in the woodland areas or at Windmill Hill or in the Dairy, sometimes using machinery – blowers, hedge cutters, strimmers and mowers. Waddesdon has almost every type of gardening, except vegetable and perennial herbaceous.

For me, the day is always rewarding, usually fun and a pretty good bunch of people to work with; as much or as little conversation as you want on trivial or serious matters.

It is fulfilling on so many different levels, according to your interests. Enhancing or acquiring skills and techniques, gardening and plant knowledge, making friends, interpersonal stuff, operational and organisational considerations, projects and management matters, or just being outside doing something physical.

Perhaps the bottom line is that you are creating part of the unique Waddesdon product. It's rare to be able to wander around somewhere and say 'I did that'."